

GROWTH HUB NEWSLETTER

May 2024

OxLEP Business Support Tool

It is our aim to signpost the county's businesses to the most-appropriate business support, schemes and events. Businesses can engage with our fully funded expert support via this link:

[Business Support Tool - OxLEP Business](#)



If you have any questions or requests for support
please email us directly at
business@oxfordshirelep.com

OxLEP Business

We are here to support your business – whatever your size, sector or stage in your journey, you can count on us and our advice. OxLEP Business is the Growth Hub for Oxfordshire, simplifying the business support landscape and helping individuals and businesses to connect more easily. We are here to help SMEs and entrepreneurs find the support they need, offering prompt, friendly, impartial advice. We signpost businesses to the right no cost business support both locally and nationally.

To find out what we can support you and your business with, please complete our Business Support Tool and see what fully funded support you could access: <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/business-support-tool/>



As part of our ongoing commitment to provide the best possible service to Oxfordshire's SME's we always ensure that other services and opportunities which may be available to business within Oxfordshire are highlighted and signposted. Over April we are pleased to have promoted the following offers and support to Oxfordshire SME's.

- A great opportunity to learn how to create a long-term strategy for your business at [Oxford Brookes Business School](#) with the **Help to Grow Management course**.
<https://www.linkedin.com/events/introducing-helptogrow-agovernm7188841607419342848/about/>
- A collaborative workshop coming on 17 May, thanks to [OxLEP Business](#), [Enterprise Nation](#) and [BIPC Oxfordshire](#), helping you to grow a business and find those elusive new customers. Find out more and sign-up to this brilliant **Google Digital Garage**, heading to Oxford soon. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/google-digital-garage-oxfordshire-tickets-875881353707?aff=oddtcreator>

OxLEP Business

- The **West Oxfordshire Business SPARK** support is now live and ready for you to sign-up. Over 20 hours of Expert Support which will get you and your brilliant business idea off to a flying start over the next few months. Register and apply here: <https://lnkd.in/gtzT4Pqm>
- In the latest edition of our podcast, '**OxTalks**' – OxLEP's [Richard Byard](#) summarises just what this means to OxLEP and Oxfordshire as well as how our 10-year plus status of delivering for the county will continue. Check out the clip below and watch the full 'OxTalks' episode via our YouTube channel: 'Start-ups and spinouts: How to find the right business support'. <https://ow.ly/AyJb50RiTgs>
- Get ready for the return of **ClimbUK's** celebration of business, linking the people leading the world's innovation with the funders who will drive and inspire them to become tomorrow's industry leaders. Experience two days filled with inspiring talks, engaging workshops, and valuable networking opportunities aimed at growing businesses and building lasting connections. Book your place: www.climb24.co.uk/
- How can your business help nature's future? Find out at **WILD OXFORDSHIRE's Nature Positive Business event**: Sowing the Seeds of Change for Nature get your business involved with Nature's recovery & help others do the same! Book your place now: <http://rb.gy/8xqifj>
- **Are you a voluntary, community and social enterprise organisation (VCSE) delivering frontline services?** Eligible organisations can apply for the cost and delivery of an independent energy assessment to help identify energy-saving opportunities in their building, and then following the assessment, for a capital grant towards the cost of installing the energy efficiency measures recommended. The first round of capital grants has now closed with the next round opening in April and a final round in July. The scheme is funded as part of a package of over £100 million of support being delivered by the Government to help frontline delivery organisations with the increased cost of living. Find out more here: https://lnkd.in/djmC6_tA

OxLEP Business Events

All our planned fully funded events can be accessed and booked here: <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/event/oxboost-network-april/>

OxBOoSt Monthly Networking - Tuesday 7th May 24

In person networking event at the **River and Rowing Museum in Henley on Thames**. 4.00pm - 5.30pm.

There are 5-8 pre-arranged slots for businesses to share their story or pitch for collaboration and a forward look of business support from OxLEP. And of course there will be plenty of time for networking.

You can request one of the business story slots on the booking form here: <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/event/oxboost-network-may/>

OxLEP Start-Up Club – Bootcamp (1) – Business Planning

14th May 24. 5:00pm - 7:00pm

For start-ups and early-stage entrepreneurs – this bootcamp is designed to encourage businesses to focus on the fundamentals of a successful business and develop a viable, successful and sustainable business.

The first of three intense sessions, each delivered by one of our experienced business experts, providing practical content to help you learn and make progress, alongside a group of supportive peers.

You will finish the Bootcamp with a clear plan on how to move your business forward and reach your next milestone.

<https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/event/oxlep-start-up-club-bootcamp-1-business-planning-4/>

OxLEP Women in Business Gathering

21st May 24, 9:30am - 12:00pm at **Jennings – Monument Park**

Our Women in Business Gatherings provide the opportunity for us to celebrate our amazing local female talent, wonderful business relationships forged to date, and the evident appetite for female empowerment across the region. OxLEP's existing and new female clients are invited to come together for a fantastic morning of networking and insightful conversation.

<https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/event/oxlep-women-in-business-gathering-6/>

OxLEP Skills

Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards 2024 finalists announced

<https://oxlepskills.co.uk/oaawards2024finalists>

The eighth annual Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards will once again shine a spotlight on our county's apprentices – and the businesses and organisations, training providers and schools that support their journey – recognising the huge contribution they make to our county's economy across a wide range of sectors. Winners will be announced at a special celebration evening on 16th May at Williams Racing Conference Centre, which will also be broadcast live.

We were delighted to introduce this year's finalists on 18th April during Oxfordshire Apprenticeships Hour (#OAHour), which takes place every Thursday on social media from 1pm. Follow #OAAwards2024 for all the latest news and updates. Congratulations and good luck to all!

Apprenticeship webinar series for employers

<https://oxlepskills.co.uk/apprenticeshipwebinarseries>

OxLEP Skills are excited to be providing a fully funded online webinar series to lend a helping hand to Oxfordshire employers who employ apprentices and are aiming for successful achievements!

Each webinar covers a different topic on the journey of an apprentice, starting with apprentice recruitment and ending with end point assessment. Hawk Training are delivering the webinars with and on behalf of OxLEP Skills.

There are three webinars remaining in the series:

Apprentice resilience (Including mentoring)

Wednesday 8th May, 12:00-12:45

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/resilience-including-mentoring-webinar-tickets-840222296507

Apprenticeship end point assessment (EPA) process

Wednesday 12th June, 12:00-12:45

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/epa-process-including-gateway-and-planning-webinar-tickets-840229287417

Apprenticeship EPA projects

Wednesday 10th July, 12:00-12:45

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/projects-at-epa-webinar-tickets-840271443507

The webinar series will be made available to watch on demand via the OxLEP YouTube channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTckOrs9FTuWeGdHjtShBNQ/videos>

Our expert Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Adviser Andrea Harrison offers fully funded support with all aspects of apprenticeships, including completions. If you'd like some help and advice, get in touch with Andrea at andrea.harrison@oxfordshirelep.com

OxLEP Skills

Apprenticeship levy funds available to support SMEs

With a dedicated apprenticeship levy fund of £2.7 million for Oxfordshire, we are reaching out to all SMEs currently considering or planning to hire an apprentice to encourage them to make use of this funding.

It's important to note that through an apprenticeship levy transfer, your business is exempt from paying the co-investment fee. This means significant financial savings as the support is already pre-funded; thus, there is no cost to your business. We encourage you to speak with one of our advisors today to learn more about how you can benefit from this opportunity.

Furthermore, we have partnerships with large employers committed to fostering specific sectors:

- Mitie is focused on supporting women in STEM.
- Hill Group is eager to advance apprenticeships within construction firms.

Engage with us to leverage these opportunities and enhance your workforce without the financial burden typically associated with apprenticeships. Contact Leah Bryan and Nikki Cooper at skills@oxfordshirelep.com

Employability support and guidance - volunteering opportunity

Our OxGROW virtual mentoring platform connects individuals aged 18+, referred by various Oxfordshire support services such as the Department for Work and Pensions Jobcentre Plus, The FEDCAP Restart Programme, and HM Prison Service, with employability support and guidance from professionals across different sectors in Oxfordshire.

Our volunteer Mentors provide text-based online mentoring tailored to the needs of the mentees, leveraging their insights into the local labour market and working environments. If you're interested in becoming a Mentor please email skills@oxfordshirelep.com

Oxfordshire Business Support

BICESTER VISION CIC CHAIRMAN RECRUITMENT

After approaching four years under his excellent stewardship, Lt Col (Retd) Lyndon Robinson has announced that he will be stepping down as Bicester Vision CIC Chair at the end of 2024. We are, therefore, actively seeking a new Chair, ideally to work alongside Lyndon for a short period of time before he steps down.

Bicester Vision CIC is core to Bicester's future prosperity, sitting, as it does, across public, private, and third sectors and community organisations, the role of Chair being pivotal to the organisation's success.

Why would anyone take on this role? The testimonials from the current Chair and a former Chair below give you the answer to that 😊!

"On retiring in 2020 as Bicester's Garrison commander I wanted to retain my connections with the Town while also giving something back to a community that had done so much for me. Chairing Bicester Vision has allowed me to do that in spades. I was able to continue to shape the organisation as a force for good in Bicester and in doing so found it really rewarding to learn so much about the business, public and charitable organisations that make up the community. That, in and of itself, was immeasurably gratifying for what was, on my part, a very modest contribution. The real reward, however, was working with the organisation's Fab4 who proved a dedicated and tightknit cohort that ran the organisation. They and the wider board, to whom they were answerable, are all professional, supportive, friendly and capable. My only regret was that I never had this opportunity in my forties when it would have put my career on steroids, such was the enormity of the professional and personal development that it entailed." Lt Col (Retd) Lyndon Robinson, current Bicester Vision Chair

"I would encourage you to apply for the role as Chair for Bicester Vision. Why, you may ask...? Most importantly – it is fun! There is a superb group of individuals that run this organisation collectively and we all have the same mindset which encompasses: collaborative working; community engagement; business growth; educational support & improvement; improving the working environment for everyone in Bicester. Finally, this is a role which will: enhance your reputation in the local community; springboard you to "VIP" status in Bicester; enable you to network and meet with the most influential people within Oxfordshire; and make you feel good about your own contribution to society." Phil Shadbolt, former Bicester Vision Chair

If you would be interested in knowing more about the role and responsibilities of Chair of Bicester Vision CIC, please contact

Sarah Fraser: sarah@fraserpa.co.uk

Oxfordshire Business Support

BICESTER VISION CIC continued

AGM & PARTNERSHIP MEETING – 16 May 2024

Our next open Partnership meeting and AGM is due to be held on Thursday, 16 May 2024, from 10am-12pm, at Bicester Hotel, Golf & Spa.

The theme of this meeting is all about community and the benefits to be gained through volunteering, for individuals, for employees, for employers, and for the charities involved. Speakers come from Bicester Village/Value Retail, The Hummingbird Centre, and Bicester Foodbank/Open Doors Café, and as ever, there will be plenty of opportunities for networking.

Registration for this free event is essential: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bicester-vision-cic-agm-and-partnership-meeting-tickets-880211625667?aff=oddtcreator>

BEST PRACTICE GROUP

February 2024 saw the first meeting of the Bicester Vision CIC Best Practice Group, hosted by the wonderful team at Brita, and focused on LEAN manufacturing and logistics.

The session served as an invaluable platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration, the roundtable discussion providing great ideas and suggestions for enhancing best practice from which all attendees could benefit.

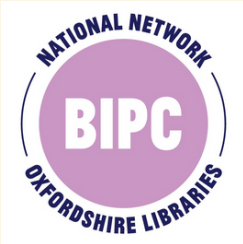
Many thanks to the entire Brita team for their hospitality and commitment to fostering business cross-collaboration. We look forward to continuing this momentum as we strive to facilitate broader participation and knowledge sharing, elevating operational standards across organisations in the area and driving further innovation in business practices.

NEW MEMBERS

Bicester Vision CIC is made up of members from across a wide variety of disciplines, sectors and size of organization; all focused on ensuring the economic and emotional prosperity of Bicester and its environs, and those that live, work and play here.

If you're interested in knowing more and/or becoming a member of the organization, please contact: sarah@fraserpa.co.uk.

Oxfordshire Business Support



Business & IP Centre Oxfordshire

At the Oxford Westgate Library

Supporting Oxfordshire residents to start, protect and grow their own business.

Events and workshops, 1:1 business information sessions, market research databases, Intellectual Property guidance, co-working desks, Photography and videography Marketing Suite, business books and more.

website: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/BIPC

Email: BIPC@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Startup Huddle Networking event

Thursday 16th May 6-8PM

BIPC, 2nd floor, Oxford Westgate Library

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/886171632207?aff=oddtcreator>

Startup Huddle is designed to help one entrepreneur at a time while strengthening the local Oxfordshire ecosystem. With 1 or 2 preselected start-ups presenting their business followed by QA and plenty of time for networking.



OSEP

OSEP provides support, empowerment, and advocacy for local social enterprises, enterprising charities, and purposeful businesses in Oxfordshire.

OSEP, a local Social Enterprise itself, plays a crucial role in fostering a community where businesses prioritise positive societal impact alongside their financial success.

Website: <https://www.osep.org.uk/>

Email: hello@osep.org.uk

Oxfordshire Business Park Information



Doing right by people and considering our planet is a top priority for us all.

Take a peek at [Oxfordshire's sustainable business parks](#), created by the Jennings team.

Have a ramble... jennings.co.uk

Non OxLEP News/Events

Women in Business Day Retreat - 5th June 24

Finding business success on your terms.

Taking you from entrepreneurial overwhelm to renewed passion and purpose in a beautiful nature setting.

<https://cherylthornton.co.uk/women-in-business-day-retreat/>

Time to Thrive' Wellbeing, this is for businesses who want to promote wellbeing raising awareness of mental health to improve employee engagement, attraction, and retention. Please see leaflet attached or contact: Cheryl@cherylthornton.co.uk

The Oxford Magazine: What's on in Oxfordshire -

<https://theoxfordmagazine.com/>

Oxfordshire County Council News: [News from Oxfordshire County Council](#)

Experience Oxfordshire: [Top 10 Things to Do in Oxford and Oxfordshire – Experience Oxfordshire](#)